

§ 220.54

require a consultative examination (these situations are not all-inclusive):

(1) The specific additional evidence needed for adjudication has been pinpointed and high probability exists for obtaining it through purchase.

(2) The additional evidence needed is not contained in the records of the claimant's treating sources.

(3) Evidence that may be needed from the claimant's treating or other medical sources cannot be obtained for reasons beyond his or her control, such as death or noncooperation of the medical source.

(4) Highly technical or specialized medical evidence which is needed is not available from the claimant's treating sources.

(5) A conflict, inconsistency, ambiguity or insufficiency in the evidence must be resolved.

(6) There is an indication of a change in the claimant's condition that is likely to affect his or her ability to function, but current severity is not documented.

(7) Information provided by any source appears not to be supported by objective evidence.

§ 220.54 When the Board will not purchase a consultative examination.

A consultative examination will not be purchased in the following situations (these situations are not all-inclusive):

(a) In disabled widow(er) benefit claims, when the alleged month of disability is after the end of the 7-year period specified in § 216.38 and there is no possibility of establishing an earlier onset, or when the 7-year period expired in the past and all the medical evidence in the claimant's file establishes that he or she was not disabled on or before the expiration date.

(b) When any issues about the actual performance of substantial gainful activity have not been resolved.

(c) In childhood disability claims, when it is determined that the claimant's alleged childhood disability did not begin before the month of attainment of age 22. In this situation, the claimant could not be entitled to benefits as a disabled child unless found disabled before age 22.

20 CFR Ch. II (4-1-08 Edition)

(d) When, on the basis of the claimant's allegations and all available medical reports in his or her case file, it is apparent that he or she does not have an impairment which will have more than a minimal effect on his or her capacity to work.

(e) Childhood disability claims filed concurrently with the employee's claim and entitlement cannot be established for the employee.

(f) Survivors childhood disability claims where entitlement is precluded based on non-disability factors.

§ 220.55 Purchase of consultative examinations at the reconsideration level.

(a) When a claimant requests a review of the Board's initial determination at the reconsideration level of review, consultative medical examinations will be obtained when needed, but not routinely. A consultative examination will not, if possible, be performed by the same physician or psychologist used in the initial claim.

(b) Where the evidence tends to substantiate an affirmation of the initial denial but the claimant states that the treating physician or psychologist considers him or her to be disabled, the Board will assist the claimant in securing medical reports or records from the treating physician.

§ 220.56 Securing medical evidence at the hearings officer hearing level.

(a) Where there is a conflict in the medical evidence at the hearing level of review before a hearings officer, the hearings officer will try to resolve it by comparing the persuasiveness and value of the conflicting evidence. The hearings officer's reasoning will be explained in the decision rationale. Where such resolution is not possible, the hearings officer will secure additional medical evidence (e.g., clinical findings, laboratory test, diagnosis, prognosis, etc.) to resolve the conflict. Even in the absence of a conflict, the hearings officer will also secure additional medical evidence when the file does not contain findings, laboratory tests, a diagnosis, or a prognosis necessary for a decision.

(b) Before requesting a consultative examination, the hearings officer will

Railroad Retirement Board

§ 220.60

ascertain whether the information is available as a result of a recent examination by any of the claimant's medical sources. If it is, the hearings officer will request the evidence from that medical practitioner. If contact with the medical source is not productive for any reason, or if there is no recent examination by a medical source, the hearings officer will obtain a consultative examination.

§ 220.57 Types of purchased examinations and selection of sources.

(a) *Additional evidence needed for disability determination.* The types of examinations and tests the Board will purchase depends upon the additional evidence needed for the disability determination. The Board will purchase only the specific evidence needed. For example, if special tests (such as X-rays, blood studies, or EKG) will furnish the additional evidence needed for the disability determination, a more comprehensive medical examination will not be authorized.

(b) *The physician or psychologist selected to do the examination or test must be qualified.* The physician's or psychologist's qualifications must indicate that the physician or psychologist is currently licensed in the State and has the training and experience to perform the type of examination or test requested. The physician or psychologist may use support staff to help perform the examination. Any such support staff must meet appropriate licensing or certification requirements of the State. See also § 220.64.

§ 220.58 Objections to the designated physician or psychologist.

A claimant or his or her representative may object to his or her being examined by a designated physician or psychologist. If there is a good reason for the objection, the Board will schedule the examination with another physician or psychologist. A good reason may be where the consultative examination physician or psychologist had previously represented an interest adverse to the claimant. For example, the physician or psychologist may have represented the claimant's employer in a worker's compensation case or may have been involved in an insurance

claim or legal action adverse to the claimant. Other things the Board will consider are: language barrier, office location of consultative examination physician or psychologist (2nd floor, no elevator, etc.), travel restrictions, and examination by the physician or psychologist in connection with a previous unfavorable determination. If the objection is because a physician or psychologist allegedly "lacks objectivity" (in general, but not in relation to the claimant personally) the Board will review the allegations. To avoid a delay in processing the claimant's claim, the consultative examination in such a case will be changed to another physician or psychologist while a review is being conducted. Any objection to use of the substitute physician or psychologist will be handled in the same manner. However, if the Board or the Social Security Administration had previously conducted such a review and found that the reports of the consultative physician or psychologist in question conform to the Board's guidelines, then the Board will not change the claimant's examination.

§ 220.59 Requesting examination by a specific physician, psychologist or institution—hearings officer hearing level.

In an unusual case, a hearings officer may have reason to request an examination by a particular physician, psychologist or institution. Some examples include the following:

(a) Conflicts in the existing medical evidence require resolution by a recognized authority in a particular specialty:

(b) The impairment requires hospitalization for diagnostic purposes; or

(c) The claimant's treating physician or psychologist is in the best position to submit a meaningful report.

§ 220.60 Diagnostic surgical procedures.

The Board will not order diagnostic surgical procedures such as myelograms and arteriograms for the evaluation of disability under the Board's disability program. In addition, the Board